

841 tribe of the Caucasus, but not to the one of the Khevsurs. The Khevsur is forbidden to take part in the construction of a *samrevlo*. This rule is enjoined by the *Khati*, the patron saint of the group. If the rule is violated, the Khevsur believes he will be punished by the *Khati*; his herds and flocks will be killed, his whole property destroyed, and he himself will be driven away.

The *samrevlo* is a small quadrangular hut, so low that a man cannot stand upright in it. It is built of stones, generally without any mortar, with a low roof of straw or timber and mud, with one small door facing the village and one small hole in the roof serving as a window and also as an outlet for smoke. There is no furniture at all, but just some straw on the earthen floor around the hearth in the center, and a few dishes and a jar for water.

784 The women who occupy a *samrevlo*,² or, to use the Georgian
841 expression, who are *samrevloth gasuli*—meaning in English, “gone to the *samrevlo*”—strew charcoal around the hut in order to keep away the evil spirits, who are supposed to be afraid of charcoal.

[278] Incidentally, it should be noted that, because of the magical power which the people ascribe to charcoal, it is used in many instances for medical purposes and as protection against the evil spirits, as in the case of the *samrevlo*.

841 These huts of the menstruating women—the *samrevlos* of the Khevsurs and Pshavs—are situated usually together near a river or brook outside the village, about one mile distant from it. Besides the menstruating women, the women with new-born babies also live in the *samrevlo*. They move from the *kokhi*—the special huts for childbirth—into the *samrevlo* within a few days after delivery.

Among the Svans also, as among the Khevsurs, Pshavs and Tushes, the woman with monthly issue is regarded as highly unclean and her husband does not dare at that time to enter the sanctuary (*Khati*) or to bring a sacrifice to the patron saint of the community, because he himself is regarded as unclean and unworthy in the eyes of the deity. Unlike the Khevsurs, Pshavs and Tushes, the Svans do not build special huts for their menstruating women; and the Tushes, whose country is nearer the civilized

¹ [See cat. 116, p. 25 ff. — Analyst]

² i.e. menstrual hut; see cat. 116, pp. 91-92 — Analyst]

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sanctuary, making a great turn in his way in order that he might not pass near the *samrevlo* and thus pollute himself." 562
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All objects and vessels used by a woman during the time of her separation in the menstrual hut (*samrevlo*) are regarded as unclean, and before returning home at the end of her abnormal state, she is obliged to scrub and clean them thoroughly. In times past they were thrown away. Besides this, she washes her clothes and takes a special bath, which among the Khevsurs is a very unusual affair.

The customs observed by the woman in time of menstruation are, comparatively, not so rigid as those required of the woman in childbed. 843
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Pregnant women also are regarded as unclean, even in a much greater degree than those in menstruation. They are called *umretskho*. The woman with child tries to conceal her condition as long as possible, but when she feels the approach of the critical moment, she is obliged to leave her home and stay apart in a small hut built for the purpose and called *sachekhi* or *kokhi*. However, according to V. Bardavelidze-Lomia,¹ the term *sachekhi* connotes, not the hut itself, but a place outside the village where all the *samrevlos* and *kokhis* are located.

The word *kokhi* means, in Georgian, a hut. Unlike the *samrevlo*, it is built by women only, usually by those who are living in the *samrevlo* at the time. The *kokhi* is much smaller and simpler in structure than the *samrevlo*. Sometimes it is built adjacent to a *samrevlo*, so that one of *samrevlo's* walls is used as a wall of the *kokhi*. It is partially floored with boards and straw; there is no window or place for a fire (hearth) as in the *samrevlo*. The hut is so small that it can accommodate only one woman, allowing a small space for her baby. The whole furniture consists of a jar for water, a wooden plate for bread or other food, and the straw spread on the earthen floor, upon which the woman lies and which is called *salogine*, from the Georgian word *logini*, meaning a bed.

In the cold semi-darkness of the *kokhi* the woman bears her child; only little girls or old women are allowed to bring her food.

¹ Bardavelidze-Lomia: 247. *1/2* [menstrual hut -- *Andokt*]

- 844 In past times the woman was left alone in the *kokhi*, without any assistance, even in the winter time when it is exceedingly cold in the mountain region. She bore her child alone, without even a fire or warm water; and often she chewed off the umbilical cord with her teeth.

There are special beliefs connected with the umbilical cord and the placenta (afterbirth). The placenta is buried in a place where "no human being or animal can disturb it or tread upon it." The placenta is regarded as unclean and in the meantime as possessing some supernatural power, a belief which I had the opportunity of observing in Megrelia. Visiting one of my acquaintances in the village of Tekladi, I found a whole house in commotion. From the bedroom came the cries and groans of a woman in travail. Soon the cry of the baby let me know that the delivery was over, and a young girl came out of the house onto the porch where I was sitting. She had in her hands a pan containing the afterbirth. The old woman who was conducting the delivery came after her and gave orders to the girl to bury the contents of the pan in the least frequented part of the yard, where "no living being could disturb it," and then to wash her hands thoroughly. While the old woman was giving these instructions she was crossing herself and saying in the Megrelian language: "*Goronti dikhuamu skani sakheli*," meaning in English: "Lord, may Thy name be sanctified."

- 846 In the *kokhi*, the woman stays only a few days after her child's birth. When she feels strong enough she moves from the *kokhi* to the hut of the menstruating women, the *samrevlo*. In order to have access to the *samrevlo* the mother and her baby are obliged to go through special rules of purification. This is required because a woman with a child is regarded as much more unclean and dangerous than those in menstruation. This belief explains why the women of the *samrevlo* frequently object to having a *kokhi* built close to their hut.

The custom of purification which must be observed by the mother and her child in moving from the *kokhi* to the *samrevlo* is as follows: The woman burns the straw (*salogine*). Among the Khevsurs she burns down the whole *kokhi*; but the Pshavs do not burn the hut. After this she takes the "holy" water into her mouth
 1/2 L. e., hut; see cat 116, p 95 -- Analyst]

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562 passes everything, one after another, over the fire, and at this time she is obliged to say the words established by custom: "Fire, give thy purity." After the *matusva*, she must put the things out of the *samrevlo* and shake them well. This is the second part of the purification and is called *gamotskepa*. And at last she must sprinkle everything with holy water which is brought to her for this purpose from the home. She takes the water into her mouth and so sprinkles the things. This last part of the purification is called *shapkhukeba*.

Only after the accomplishment of all the above-mentioned tasks are the woman, her baby and belongings regarded as clean and as having the right to enter the home of her family.

278 The "holy" water which is used by the woman for the purification is the water which is blessed by the preacher during the church ceremonies in commemoration of Christ's baptism. The people take the water home and preserve it in bottles for such future use as cleansing, purifying, and medical purposes. This custom is in universal use throughout Georgia. I remember seeing such bottles in many houses. The water is regarded by the people as medicine against almost every kind of disease: such as sore eyes, stomach trouble, headache, etc.

● 844
562 Among the Svans also, the woman lying in childbed is regarded as unclean and is put in a separate place but not in a special hut built for her sojourn. The woman is in isolation and in considered as unclean until the priest says special prayers of purification upon her and the baby. Not only contact, as was mentioned above concerning the women in menstruation, but even the mere presence of such a woman in the neighborhood makes a hunter polluted and consequently unable to take part in the hunting expedition.

844
787 When the Khevsur woman is in travail during childbirth and her loud screams and cries are heard far from the *kokhi*, her husband and relatives approach the hut and with loud shouts fire their guns in order to keep away evil spirits. Or sometimes the husband runs into the hut, places his gun on the shoulder of his suffering wife, and shouts to her words of encouragement while firing his gun. He does this only with the aim of driving

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away the evil spirits, who, as they believe, are torturing the woman.⁸⁴⁴ This custom is preserved at present in the inaccessible mountain⁷⁸⁹ regions of the Caucasus, and was in ancient times practiced in the whole of Georgia, with the difference that instead of a gun the man used his bow and arrow.

This belief in the existence of the evil spirits attacking the⁷⁷⁶ woman in childbed and the new-born baby prevails among all⁷⁸² groups of the Georgian Highlanders. Thus the Khevsurs believe⁸⁴⁶ that the evil spirits who attack the mother and the babe are small black creatures, countless in number and called *dobilebi*.¹¹ The people believe that the *dobilebi* live among the old deserted homes (ruins) in the village or its vicinity. Such places are known to the Khevsurs as the *banurani*. The evil spirits (*dobilebi*) annoy and disturb the human beings, although they cannot kill them. The *dobilebi* especially seek women and babies, especially children when they are ill. This is regarded by the Khevsurs as the cause of the attack of the *dobilebi*, which they express in the following words: "*Dobilthashi gekhviv*." In order to drive the evil spirits from the ill child it is necessary, as they believe, for the whole family to observe the custom called *ashlis dashla*. It consists of taking forty-five cakes, or, as they say in Georgian, *samjer khuthmeti*, meaning "three times fifteen" (from the Georgian words, *sami*, meaning three, and *khuthmeti*, meaning fifteen). Besides these forty-five pieces of bread, a special large cake is baked with cheese or meat filling and smeared on top with butter. This large cake is called *satsinao*. All these cakes are brought to the place of residence of the evil spirits and thrown to the village children, who, having been informed beforehand, are waiting by the ruins (*banurani*). The child who succeeds in catching the large cake (the *satsinao*) is regarded as the luckiest. Instead of bringing cakes, the Khevsurs sometimes kill a goat in the *banurani*. In this case the head of the animal belongs to the man who killed it and the rest to the owner.

This custom of bringing the cake or killing the animal in the *banurani*—the place regarded as the residence of the evil spirits—

¹¹ Bardavididze-Lomia: 254-5.

776 is nothing else than bringing a sacrifice to them in order to appease
 782 their anger and make them favorably disposed to allow the ill
 846 child to live.

Besides the babies and their mothers, according to the opinion
 776 of the Khevsurs, the evil spirits (*dobilebi*) also attack the women
 844 in general, and consequently every misfortune occurring to a
 woman is ascribed to the *dobilebi*. The Pshavs believe that a
 woman with child is pursued by the evil spirit called *matsuli*, who
 tries to change her baby.

Belief in the existence of evil spirits who attack babies and
 women prevails not only among the Khevsurs and other Georgian
 Highlanders, but also among all groups of the Georgian nation.
 Such beliefs are likewise encountered among other peoples of the
 Caucasian peninsula, and far away beyond the Caucasus among
 the peoples of Asia Minor.

Thus, the Georgians of the province of Kakheti¹² believe in
 the existence of the evil creature called *Ali*, which is represented
 as a beautiful girl with golden locks. She enters the room of the
 woman in childbed and is able to kill with one stroke both mother
 and child.

The Georgians of Karthli and the mountain region called
 Mthiulni also know the creature *Ali*, which resembles in appear-
 ance and character the one described above.

The Georgians believe, according to Dr. J. Reineggs,¹³ that the
 evil spirits—the *Luftgeister*, as he calls them in German—attack
 with great glee the mother and the new-born baby.

The Georgians of Meskhethi¹⁴ have an evil spirit called the
avi-suli, which enters the house where the woman is lying in child-
 bed and endangers her and her child's well-being. The name *avi-*
suli means "evil soul," formed from the Georgian words, *avi* (evil)
 and *suli* (soul).

Besides these examples, showing the belief of some of the
 Georgian groups in the existence of evil spirits attacking the
 mother and baby, similar beliefs are held by all other groups of

¹² Chursin: a, 50; also e, 26.

¹³ Reineggs: 112-113.

¹⁴ Khakhanov: b, 10-11.

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the Georgian nation, as we shall see in reviewing their customs in protecting women and children against evil forces. ⁷⁷⁶
777 ●

As we noted previously, similar beliefs concerning the matter, ¹⁷¹ under discussion, are held by other peoples of the Caucasus and ⁷⁷⁶ by the peoples of Asia Minor. Thus the Abkhazians¹⁵ are con-⁷⁷⁷vinced that the evil spirit whom they call *abu-ikou* attacks women in childbed.

The mountaineers of Daghestan¹⁶ have a being similar to the ¹⁷¹ *ali* of the Georgians,² who is regarded as very dangerous for women in childbed and is called *Alpab*, meaning "red woman." *Alpab* is presented as a creature of very small stature, about the size of a three-year-old girl, with long red hair touching her heels. Although *Alpab* is beautiful and seems to be good-natured and harmless, in reality she is very malignant and cruel, and tries with all her power to destroy the human race.

The Jewish mountaineers of Daghestan¹⁷ also believe in the existence of evil spirits of the female sex, similar in character to *Alpab* in Daghestan and called by them *Dedei-ol*, meaning the "mother-ol."

The Turks of Azerbaijan believe in the existence of a creature which destroys mothers and new-born babies, and which is called *Al-anasi*.

The Turks of Shemakha district¹⁸ have a female being called *Al* with a cat's snout and red hair. She pulls out women's hair and throws it into the water and kills babies by poisoning them with her own milk.

The Udins of Vartashen¹⁹ think that there is a creature called *Hal* which attacks the woman with child. *Hal* tries to kill the woman by taking out her heart and liver.

The Talishes²⁰ of the southern part of the Lencoran district also have a belief in the existence of an angry, bloodthirsty creature who attacks the mother and baby. She is represented as a black

¹⁵ Derjavin: 15.

¹⁶ Mamedov.

¹⁷ Anisimov: 43.

¹⁸ Djegangir.

¹⁹ Bejanov: 245, 260.

²⁰ Chursin: e, 25.

² [see cat. 116, p. 100 -- Analyst]

² [see cat. 116, p. 100 -- Analyst]

every night during its first two weeks of life, a group comprising mostly young people is assembled in the room with the mother and pass the nights in games, dancing and music. These nightly vigils have a special name in Georgian, *hamis theva*, meaning "watch night."

The Georgians of Guria²⁹ also observe the custom of *hamis theva*, but only for one night, either one week or two weeks after the child is born.

The Georgians of Megrelia also have the custom of observing the night watch, which is called in their language *serish takhua*, meaning "vigilant night." Literally the Megrelian expression, *serish takhua*, means in English, "breaking of a night," from the Megrelian words, *seri* (night) and the verb, *takhua* (to break).

Besides the Georgians, the same custom of night watch is observed by other peoples of the Caucasus. For example, the Karachais³⁰ regard the first seven days after the birth of the child as the most dangerous, and in order to protect the child from the attack of evil spirits the young girls are assembled in the room with the mother and baby, and pass the time in games while watching the child. The seventh night is regarded by them as the most dangerous and has the special name, *stim keche* or *bastiri klangan*, which means "the night of nightmare."

Among the Talish, on the sixth day after the birth of the child, to protect it from the attack of the evil spirit called *Shasha*, the relatives and friends of the family keep the watch-night. They keep the light the whole night through in the room where the baby is, and place a fish net over the crib. In case they fall asleep, they place bread and milk at the entrance of the room, on the porch, so that, as they think, *Shasha* will eat it and will not touch the child.

Besides watching the mother and child against possible attack by the evil spirits, the people resort for protection to the magical powers of different objects. Among them the most important in the Caucasus is plain iron, or such objects as daggers, sabres, sickles, axes, awls, knives (especially with black handles), etc.

²⁹ Mamaladze: 155.

³⁰ Chursin: e, 28.

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Besides iron objects, other things frequently used for magical purposes are charcoal, rope in imitation of a snake, red thread, and fish net; and it may be added that they believe in the protective and cleansing power of fire.

However, of all the objects used for magical purposes, the people in the Caucasus regard iron as the most important.

So the Khevsur woman²¹ expecting a child must have under her pillow, especially for the occasion, a sabre called in Georgian *kajis-tmiani khmali*, which represents a sabre with the allegorical picture of the evil spirit.

The Pshavs,²² neighbors of the Khevsurs, give to the woman in childbed a dagger and a pig's tooth as protection against the evil spirit called *matsuli*. The Pshavs believe that the evil spirit is afraid of the pig's tooth and dagger, and will leave the woman and babe undisturbed.

Among the Georgian mountaineers of Karthli the woman preparing herself for delivery places around her bed such iron things as an awl, a sickle, an axe, a knife with a black handle, and other iron objects.

The Georgians of the Thelav district, department of Tiflis, in order to keep a child quiet and safely protected from evil spirits, put into the child's crib such pieces of iron because they believe the evil spirit will avoid them.

The same Georgians,²³ when carrying a child on a night trip, consider it necessary to protect it from evil spirits by putting a knife and a piece of charcoal in its bed-linen, because the people think that evil spirits are afraid of these things. And for the protection of the mother from the evil spirits, they put a dagger or sabre under her pillow. It is also interesting to note the custom of the same group of Georgians to lighten the sufferings of women in travail. If a woman is in travail, her husband must bring water in the skirt of his hand and give a drink to her. Or sometimes they invite a man who has chanced to set free a frog from the mouth of a snake. He approaches the suffering woman and,

²¹ Bardavelidze-Lomia: 238.

²² Khizanashvili: 138.

²³ Stepanov: 63, 81.

- 787 giving her water to drink, says: "Child, separate from the mother,
814 as I have separated the frog from the snake!"

751 In this last-mentioned custom we have the belief in the magical power of the action of separation with the same object of helping the woman in travail and speeding the delivery as is used in other actions, such as opening, division, unlocking, emptying, etc.

The Georgians of Imerethi,³⁴ in order to protect the child from the evil spirits, put in its cradle, under the pillow, a knife with a black handle, and charcoal. Many pregnant women carry a knife with them during the day, and at night keep them under their pillows—for the purpose of keeping the evil spirits and their dangerous influence away from them.

Among the Georgians of the province of Ratcha³⁵ the woman delivers her child in a separate room. She is put, not on a bed, but on straw which is spread on the floor. And as the woman is very weak by this time, they believe that the evil spirit may easily seize her *sheipkros*, as they say in Georgian. To avoid this danger, they put under her pillow the holy image of the Virgin Mary and a dagger, as in their opinion the two-edged dagger is the only weapon of which the evil spirit is afraid.

In this case we have the usual mixture in the Caucasus of the old primitive beliefs with Christianity. The image of the Virgin Mary is endowed with the same magical power of protection from evil spirits as a piece of iron—the dagger.

- 778 The belief in the magical power of a dagger (iron) is clearly manifested in the customs of the Pshavs,³⁶ observed during the marriage ceremony, when the brother of the bride, at the time of the procession around the house-hearth, strikes with his dagger the iron chain called *sakideli*, in order to keep the evil spirits away from the bride. The dagger is considered by the Pshavs, as we mentioned previously,³⁷ as a sacred object, *samkhtho sagania*, and drives evil spirits away.

³⁴ Mashrko: 306.

³⁵ Japaridze: 138.

³⁶ Khizanashvili: 125.

³⁷ See Chapter VI on Marriage.

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The same cleansing power of fire is used by the Khevsur woman⁷⁸³ at the time of her purification when she leaves the menstrual hut⁸⁴⁴ (samrevlo) and returns home with her baby.

Many other peoples of the Caucasus share the Georgians' belief¹⁷¹ in the supernatural power of fire.⁴² Thus, for example, the Abkhazians,⁴³ in order to protect women in childbed from the evil spirit, called *abn-ikon*, ask the help of the god of the house-hearth, called *ajakhar*, promising him a thank-offering for his help.

The people also believe in the protective power of a rope in the shape of a snake. For example, in the district of Sakatali, a rope⁷⁸⁷ resembling a snake is laid around the woman in childbed and the people continually fire their guns, because they believe that evil spirits are afraid of snakes and gun-shots.

In some parts of Georgia red thread is also used as a defense against the evil spirits attacking women in childbed. In such cases, the hip of the woman in travail is bound with red thread as a means of providing sympathetic magic which will protect her from evil spirits⁴⁴ who, as the people think, cause the suffering.

It should be interesting to mention briefly the belief of the⁷⁹² Georgians, not only in the magical power of red thread, but in the⁷⁵³ red color generally. Almost every contagious disease is understood by the people to be sent not merely by evil spirits but as personifications of the spirits themselves.⁴⁵ Therefore, to cure the sick it is necessary, in their opinion, to please the spirits. The spirits are called *batonebi*, meaning "lords," the plural form of the Georgian word, *batoni*, meaning a lord. In order to appease and beseech the *batonebi*⁴⁶ to depart from sick persons, they try to please them with songs, music, prayers, decorating the room with gay colors, putting on a new dress, keeping everything clean, avoiding any disturbances, etc.

The principal color in decorating and dressing is red. This⁷⁵⁵ color predominates, and red thread is used as a protective

⁴² Chursin: f.

⁴³ Derjavin: 14-15.

⁴⁴ Jashvili: 63.

⁴⁵ Stepanov: 88-9.

⁴⁶ Mamaladze: 45-6.

755 measure. For example, if someone is ill with smallpox or measles, his neighbors stretch red thread around their fences and bind the waists of their children with red thread, because they believe it has the power to stop the disease. I remember seeing the children wearing such arm-bands for two weeks, when the child of one of our neighbors was ill with measles. And in the family of the sick an offering is brought to the *batonebi*. The offering consists of a hen, if the ill person is a girl, or a cockerel if it be a boy. The head, wings and legs of this fowl are painted red and the fowl is turned loose in the yard. Among the Georgians of Imerti,⁴⁷ when the sick person has recovered, the offered fowl is killed, cooked, and, together with cakes specially baked for the purpose, is taken into the nearby forest and put in such a place that "no human hand can reach them." The food and dishes are left in the woods and it is strictly forbidden to touch them. The Georgians of Megrelia also give similar offerings to the *batonebi*, as mentioned, with the difference that the fowl is permitted to live to senility, when it is killed and eaten by the family sacramentally.

787 In addition to the above-mentioned objects used as protection
844 against evil spirits, the fish net is also regarded as a powerful medium.

The belief in the protective power of the fish net against the evil spirits attacking the mother in childbed and her babe was universal throughout Georgia in past times, and survives in different parts of the country today.

Interesting information concerning this matter is found in the work of Dr. J. Reineggs.⁴⁸ He relates that in order to protect the woman in childbed and her babe from the attack of evil spirits, the Georgians observe the custom of placing a sword or dagger beneath the pillow of the mother. And over the blanket of her bed is spread a red fish net, and at its sides lead bullets are fastened in order to keep the net in equilibrium on all sides and make it impossible for the evil spirits to penetrate the covers. In

⁴⁷ Sagaradze: 13-14.

⁴⁸ Reineggs: 112-113.

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such an uncomfortable position the woman must remain for forty ⁷⁵⁷ days before she will be permitted to breathe fresh air or leave ⁷⁵⁷ the bed. "She exposes herself to every possible danger," adds the author, "if she at this time trims her hair or cuts her nails."

The belief in the magical power of the fish net is also expressed ⁷⁵⁵ in special prayers⁴⁹ used for the healing of sick people of their afflictions, as, for example, in the prayers of the Georgians of Guria⁵⁰ to cure a cold, known by the name of *ujmuri*. "*Kirkali* is good," is said in the prayer. "Fish net by the head, the hackle-comb by the side," etc. The fish net is used also in the prayers recited at the time of childbirth by the Georgians of Meskheti.⁵¹

The pieces of such a net are kept sometimes in the house for ⁷⁵⁷ this purpose. In the Museum of the Georgian Society of History ⁷⁵⁷ and Ethnography, situated in Tiflis, is conserved a net specially made to cover the bed of a woman in childbirth. This net is made of red silk thread and is bestrewn with spangles. It was brought to the Museum from the upper part of Imerethi.⁵²

Here, as in the case described by Dr. Reineggs, we have the net of red color which may be regarded as more powerful than the ordinary net, because to the magical power of the net is added the power of red thread and the color itself.

The Georgians of Imerethi,⁵³ to safeguard a woman with child, stretch a fish net from the ceiling over her bed, put a dagger under her pillow, and an axe on the threshold of the room. The evil spirit, they think, may be frightened by the axe and will not dare to enter the woman's room; but in case this obstacle fails to stop him, he surely will be scared of the net, in which he may be ensnared, and upon the dagger, as upon the axe, he may cut himself. With all these precautions taken, the evil spirits will by no means disturb the mother and the babe.

The same custom was formerly observed also by the Georgians of Megrelia. In the seventeenth century, at the time of the

⁴⁹ Chursin: 0, 222.

⁵⁰ Mamaladze: 103-4.

⁵¹ Khakhanov: b, 11.

⁵² Chursin: *Ibid*.

⁵³ Mashurko: 306.

789 residence in Megrelia of the Italian missionary, Archangelo
 849 Lamberti, this custom was in common use in the country. "As
 ● the most important means against the evil spirits," writes
 [150] Lamberti,⁵⁴ "they (the Megrelians) regard the fish net with which
 they cover the beds of the sick and the cradles of the children.
 With this net they think to cleanse the air of witchcraft and the
 'evil eye,' which, as they believe, is dangerous to the sick person.
 Besides, in order to frighten the devil, they put under the pillow
 of the sick person an unsheathed sword and also a spear or some
 other weapon."

In order to protect the woman in childbed, the Georgians of
 Meskhethi⁵⁵ nail a horse shoe or iron chain on the threshold of the
 room, because they believe that the evil spirit (*avi suli*) will not
 dare to step over them and enter the room. The mother and the
 baby are covered with the net, and at the mother's head they put
 a dagger and a spit with three onions upon it, as they believe that
 the odor of the onions is disgusting to the *avi suli*. The dagger
 and the spit, as iron things, are regarded by them as the best
 means of repulsing the evil spirits. But to make safety certain,
 besides the above measures, it is necessary also, they think, to say
 a special prayer for the occasion which must be repeated by the
 woman with child.

Among the Georgians of Guria,⁵⁶ the woman expecting a
 child is called in Guria *melogine*, meaning "the laying in bed," from
 the Georgian word, *logini* (bed).⁵⁷ After the birth of the child
 as soon as the woman is put to bed, the dagger is placed under
 her pillow, the iron hackle-comb is put under her bed, and upon
 the bed is hung the fish net. This is done with the aim of keeping
 away the evil spirits from the mother and babe, whom it likes to
 attack. The net, dagger and comb are used in this case as the
 objects of which, according to the people's opinion, the evil spirit
 is afraid.

⁵⁴ Lamberti: 168.

⁵⁵ Khakhanov: b, 10.

⁵⁶ Jorbenadze: 246.

⁵⁷ Mamaladze: 92.